

LETTER

TO

J O H N B U L L :

TO WHICH IS ADDED

THE SKETCH OF A PLAN

FOR THE

SAFE, SPEEDY, AND EFFECTUAL ABOLITION

OF

Slavery.

BY**A FREE-BORN ENGLISHMAN.**

“Beware of hardness of heart toward thy poor brother.”—DEUT. XV. 9.

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TO WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, M. P.

“ Let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not.”—GAL. vi. 9.

LETTER,

§c.



“ It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing.”
GAL. iv. 18.

PATRIOTISM.

“ THEY tell us of an Indian tree,
Which, howsoe'er the sun and sky
May tempt its boughs to wander free,
And shoot and blossom wide and high,
Far better loves to bend its arms
Downward again to that dear earth,
From which, the life that fills and warms
Its grateful being, first had birth.
'T is thus, though woo'd by flattering friends,
And fed with fame (if fame it be),
This heart, my own dear “ (*Country*),” bends
With love's true instinct, back to thee.”—MOORE.

“ I love thee, O my native isle!
Dear as my mother's earliest smile;
Sweet as a father's voice to me
Is all that here, around I see.

I love thee, when I mark thy soil
Flourish beneath the peasant's toil.

I love thee, when I hear around,
 Thy looms and wheels and anvils sound.
 I love thee, when I read the lays
 Of bards of old, and present days.
 I love thee, when I contemplate
 The full-orb'd grandeur of thy state.
 I love thee, when thy sabbath dawns
 O'er woods and mountains, dales and lawns;
 When, hand in hand, thy tribes repair
 Each to their chosen house of prayer.
 I love thee, when my soul can feel
 The scrapph ardours of thy zeal.
 I love thee, when I see thee stand
 The hope of every other land;
 A sea-mark in the tide of time,
 Rearing to heaven thy brow sublime.
 I love thee, when I hear thy voice
 Bid the oppressed *slave* rejoice;
 And loud, from shore to shore proclaim,
 In every tongue, Messiah's name.
 I love thee next to heaven above;
 Land of my fathers, thee I love!
 I love thee dearly, scoff who will,
 With all thy faults, I love thee still.

Yes, *thou* hast faults of heinous size,
 From which I turn with weeping eyes;
 On these, let them that hate thee dwell,
 Yet *one* I spare not, one *I* tell.
 O Britain, O my country, bring
 Forth from thy camp th' accursed thing!
 Consign it to remorseless fire;
 Watch, till the latest spark expire;
 Then cast the ashes to the wind,
 Nor leave one atom wreck behind."

MONTGOMERY.

TO JOHN BULL.

FRIEND JOHN,

Do not suppose, John, because I *thee*, and *thou*, and *friend* thee, that therefore I am one of those people of humanity and peace whom thou art pleased, in thy professed love of justice, to designate *Quacks* and *Quakers*. Neither do thou suppose, because I may express that reverence for pure Christianity which I trust I shall always feel, and on all proper occasions profess, that I am one of those whom thou, in thy boasted Christian charity, denominatest *Saints*, *Humbugs*, and *Wilberforces*. I choose to assume the language of the former for various reasons; it will afford me the opportunity of using that plainness and simplicity of speech which thou affirmest that thou lovest, and it will at the same time, I hope, preserve me from any of that asperity, warmth, or vulgarity of expression, from which, I am sorry to say, that thou, John, dost not always keep thyself free. I moreover love the people called Quakers, their simple manners, and their plain speaking. I use the language of a religious man, because I do sincerely hope and trust, that I am one; and because I consider that pure and undefiled religion is *every thing* to man; that without it, he would be worse than nothing, and that with it, he possesseth all things.

The immediate occasion of my now addressing thee, John, is the part which thou hast taken in opposing those who are seeking to procure the abolition of slavery. Attachment to the constitution of thy country, both in Church and State, thou professest, and, I would willingly hope, sincerely professest to possess. If, then, it can be shown, which I am persuaded it may be, that the continuance of slavery in the British dominions is disgraceful and injurious to both Church and State, and in direct viola-

tion of the spirit as well as the letter of their laws, I trust, John, that thou wilt not only be convinced of the folly and wickedness of permitting it, but that thou wilt, like a man of honest intentions and of firm integrity, as thou profess-est to be, lend thy powerful aid to expose its cruel injustice, and to rid thy deservedly beloved country of this foul blot upon her comparatively unsullied character.

Thou professest too, John, to love thy King. Thy King, John, has been from his youth up a man of honour, sincerity, and humanity. He is a man who would rather suffer than inflict misery; who would rather be the object than the instrument of oppression. Thy King, John, I am sure would rejoice that there should not exist a slave in his wide-extended dominions. Never, John, I will venture to say, was there a King who has throughout his reign evinced less disposition to encroach on the freedom of his people, or a stronger inclination to conciliate and engage their affections. Can such a King as this, John, delight in the oppression of the meanest of his people? No, John; the truths, the painful truths, which the recent investigation of this disgraceful subject has brought, and is daily bringing to light, must have wrung his feeling heart, and have drawn forth many a wish that slavery may be no more. Slavery, John, will find no advocate, no supporter in *George the Fourth!* If, John, thou desirest to serve, to please, and to exalt thy Sovereign, lend thy whole strength, for thou art *strong*, and therefore be merciful; lend, I say, thy whole strength to remove from thy King, thy country, and from the world, a practice disgraceful to human nature, and doubly disgraceful to a Christian people.

Thou boastest, John, that thou lovest to call things by their right names; I love to do so too, and therefore I mean, as far as I know, so to do throughout the whole of this address. But, John, thou shouldst be careful, that, under pretext of calling things by their *right* names, thou

dost not make mistakes—that thou are not blinded or deceived by prejudice, so as to do the very reverse of that which thou professest to do. Call a spade a spade and welcome, but do not call white black, merely because thou, mayhap, being thyself in the dark, perceivest not the difference. Now this, I am fearful, John, that thou sometimes doest. For instance, thou callest every man who is opposed, in any degree, to the representation of stage plays, a *fanatic*. Now, John, this cannot be the case. Dr. Johnson tells us that a fanatic is a madman: Agrippa told St. Paul that *he* was a madman. Agrippa, as well as thou, John, was prejudiced, and therefore he asserted the thing that was not. The disapproval of stage plays is no proof, John, of madness, else were almost every serious man that ever lived in a Christian country a madman when he came to die. Thou knowest, John, that thou professest to believe the articles of the Christian faith, as set forth in the Creed of the Established Church. Thou therefore believest that there is a God and a future state, in which the spirits of men must be happy or miserable *for ever*, in proportion as they have lived in conformity to the will of God as declared in the Scriptures, while they were in the body. Now, John, I believe that thou, as a true Church of England man, wilt admit that there is no risk of being condemned for not going to, or approving of, stage plays; therefore, that men are not necessarily madmen, as thou maintainest, because they do neither approve nor sanction them. Since then, John, thou hast thus erred in one instance, in attempting to call things by their right name, there is a *possibility* that thou mayest have done so likewise, in some other instances. It is possible that a man may be a Quaker without being a *quack*, or an opposer of slavery without being a *humbug*.

I am a friend to plain dealing, John, as well as thyself; but plain dealing doth not necessarily include rude or abusive

language; nevertheless, I will admit that, with all thy errors thou hast been an instrument in doing much good. Thou hast shown those who had been long used to traduce and vilify in coarse language all that was valuable, loyal, and sacred, that a similar mode of warfare might be used on the other side, and turned effectually against themselves. This has checked a practice as disgusting as it is mischievous. Do not thou then, John, become thyself an auxiliary of those whom thou hast, in many instances, so successfully opposed; neither use that sword which thou professest to wield only in the defence of thy King and of thy country, against the best interests of both.

I can make all due allowances, John, for the difficulty of the task which thou hast undertaken to perform. I believe that, in one instance at least, thou hast been visited with a degree of severity which the usual practice of those opposed to thee could scarcely justify. That very severity, however, John, should have been suffered to teach thee a lesson, which it appears to have failed of doing in the manner which might have been expected, and which was to have been wished. He that looks for mercy should at least be himself just. Mercy and justice, John, are not confined to people of any country, of any degree, or of any colour. The stranger, the poor, the unprotected, the ignorant, the copper-coloured, and the black, have all as strong claims to them as any others. The feelings of all these may be as acute as our own; and whether their natural faculties be, or be not, as capable of cultivation as ours, their souls are as precious in the sight of God as those of the most enlightened of mortals. The difference between the wisdom of the wisest and the most ignorant of men, is not even a shade when compared with that of God. In proportion to our superior wisdom ought to be our superior imitation, in mercy and goodness, of *Him* who is the fountain of both, of *Him* from whom

we derive whatever we possess of superiority over the lowest and the weakest of our fellow-creatures. Do not then let us for a moment suppose, that superior knowledge or power can give us any right to oppress those who have been, in these respects, less favoured than ourselves.

These remarks, John, as thou wilt surmise, are intended to apply to thy observations on slaves and slavery, as well as to that seemingly unaccountable opposition, which *thou*, of all men, ought to be among the last to manifest to the abolition of cruel bondage. He who is himself loud in condemning misconduct in others, ought surely to be careful that he is not himself guilty of the same; and much more so, that he do not, directly or indirectly, encourage that conduct which he professeth to condemn.

Thou, John, by thine own admission, hadst been guilty, whether inadvertently or not, of that which was in some degree wrong, and therefore thou wert amenable to punishment. No matter that the offence had not in others been always visited by the utmost rigour—all who committed it were liable to the consequences—thou didst choose to run the risk, and thy fault was visited by unmerited severity. Thou wert made to feel the rod, and the people heard thy complaints. I know that it is said that it was not *thou* that wast punished, but only thy representative—a *man of straw* dressed up to resemble thee, and set up, like other men of straw, themselves harmless beings, serving only to alarm, while thou thyself (the great unknown) lying concealed behind the hedge, could shoot and murder with impunity. I know not how this is, nor does it in this case much matter; since I can see no other, I must consider this man of straw as being the aggressor and the principal. I am not acquainted with more of the circumstances than what thou hast thyself been pleased to furnish us with, but I will admit them to have been as represented, and they were hard and appalling enough.

Let us now then, John, contrast the injustice, the cruelty, the oppression, and the injury which thou hast received, with that which is experienced by the negro slaves. I think this the more necessary, because the influence which thou possessest, and hast exerted in this case, has, in my opinion, done more temporary harm to the negro cause, than that of all the rest put together. In general, the opponents of the abolition are those who are known to be interested men: thou, in this case, art supposed not to be so. Ridicule is often a powerful weapon, though it is easy to wield: thou hast not spared it, because it was the only one which thou couldst in this instance find. Arguments were not adapted to thy purpose, or rather thou couldst not lay thine hand upon any, for verily thy opponents had got firm possession of them all.

Thou complainest, that for a very trivial fault thou wast taken away from thy wife and children, from thy business and from thy home, and condemned to be confined during eight weeks in a prison, and at the end thereof to pay a very considerable sum of money, or else to continue in confinement till the same was paid. Now this, John, thou didst feel and complain of as a very severe punishment, and probably it was so. Yet, John, thou canst join and support those who are guilty of much greater severity to much less offending beings. I do not say, John, that none of the negro slaves have been condemned by the laws of their country to that state, for having been guilty of crimes; but I think that I may venture to say, that not one in ten, probably not one in a hundred, have become slaves in consequence of transgressions of that or any other nature. At any rate, that circumstance takes nothing away from the guilt of those who punish and hold in captivity all or any of those of their fellow-creatures who are offered for sale by persons who show neither right nor title to the possession of them. Whether the poor creatures have been

condemned to the punishment of slavery for their crimes, have been made prisoners in war, or have been (as is most general) kidnapped, or surprised and captured unarmed, matters not to the purchasers of them. It is an inquiry never made, for it would be as useless as ineffectual. Since, therefore, none of them are *known* to be guilty, we are justified in considering them as being all innocent. By white men or their agents (which is the same thing) are these unoffending, unresisting human beings, seized and condemned, unheard, to perpetual slavery and misery. Thou wert loud, John, in thy complaints; but thy habitation was not fired in the dead of the night, when thou wast sleeping in unsuspecting
innocent children around thee. Thou wast not seized by the more remorseless ruffians, as thou wert flying, with thy shrieking family, from the remorseless flames. Thou wast not driven, with thy wife and little ones, captives, day after day, over the burning sands. Thou wast not stowed, separated perhaps from all that thou didst love, with others like thyself, as if you had all been dead carcasses, side by side, without space to move, between a floor and ceiling so low as not to leave room to sit upright. Thou wast not kept in such a situation for weeks together, in almost total darkness, ill fed, in an atmosphere unfit for respiration, amidst the sighs and moanings of thy fellow-sufferers, and the groans of the dying; the dead body of thy companion perhaps fastened to thee. This, John, notwithstanding all thy complaints, thou happily didst not suffer. Thou didst not see thy children die one by one, in agonies, unaided, and then hear the splashing of the ocean waves, as their corpses were cast from the deck into the sea. Thou didst not hear the moans of the blind and incurable (thy wife among the rest), as they are stowed in casks, to be cast overboard if occasion required. Thou didst not live one of a hundred emaciated survivors, out of five hundred healthy beings,

stowed together only one eventful month before. Yet, John, scenes and sufferings such as these are nothing rare. Is this, John, I ask thee, is this murder? or is it something worse? It would have been an act of mercy to the captives, and a crime of a fainter die in the captors, in my opinion, to have cut the throats, in the first instance, of one half of these unhappy creatures.

But we have not yet done. Dreadful and appalling as this is—this is not all! Thou thoughtest that it was very hard, John, for thou hast told us so, to be shut up, even unshackled, in a comparatively comfortable room, during only eight weeks, though thou hadst space enough to walk about, hadst plenty to eat, couldst occasionally see thy wife and children and friends, and hadst pen, and ink, and books, and bed, and many other comforts. But it was captivity (though short), and therefore it was misery.—I do not wonder, John, at thy complaining; but I wonder much, that, having suffered thus, and having thus complained, thou shouldst not feel a little more for those who suffer in a much greater degree. What wouldst thou have said, John, if thou hadst been taken and compelled to toil, along with scores of other unoffending beings, before a large scorching fire, at the *tread-mill*, for ten or twelve hours every day, Sundays only excepted, nay, sometimes night and day, with little intermission, having only very poor and scanty food, while a tyrant, big with a little brief authority, was constantly cracking a cart-whip behind you, and, on the least seeming remission of your exertions, lacerating and drawing blood from your backs with it? What wouldst thou have said, John, had these tyrants, who had by some unlawful means got possession of them, compelled thy wife and children to the same life-wasting exertions? What wouldst thou have said, John, if, for unintentionally resting your wearied bodies too long in the morning, thyself, thy wife, or perhaps thy grown-up daughter, were stretched naked, with

face downwards, on the floor, there held by the arms and legs, while a brute in human shape lacerated with a whip a part of the body which the delicacy of English ears permits not to be named? Nay, John, what wouldst thou have said, hadst thou seen thy merciless tyrant take thy wife, or thy grown-up daughter, to be the unprotected victims of prostitution? John! John! does not thy flesh creep upon thy bones? Does not thy blood run cold with horror? or rather, does it not boil with indignation at a supposition such as this? But these, John, are no fancied, no exaggerated, no uncommon transactions. Such things *are*, John! such things have long existed! such things have long been *known* to exist! Was it not time then, thinkest thou, John, that some persons should exert themselves to put a stop to them?

These sufferings are not pretended to be the punishment of crime; they are not to cease in a week, a month, or a year; no, John, these are no *eight weeks'* sufferings for wrong doing; they are sufferings of the innocent for *life*, and, as far as man's influence can serve to produce so dreadful an effect, for *eternity*. Now, John, I think that it may safely be left to thee to say, if thou thinkest that men who exert themselves to prevent the exercise and continuance of tyranny such as this, are, for so doing, deserving of being stigmatized as *Quacks* and *Humbugs*!

Dost not thou know, John, that upwards of *eight hundred thousand* subjects of Great Britain, of that freedom-giving land, are daily suffering, or liable to suffer, at the will of despotic masters, all these, and ten times more, appalling miseries?

It is, I believe, now, an uncontroverted axiom, that whatever is morally wrong cannot be politically right: in other words, that whatever is offensive in the sight of God, cannot conduce to the good of man. Injustice, tyranny, and oppression, *must* be offensive in the sight of God;

they must, therefore, be injurious to the best interest of both individuals and states. Injustice, tyranny, and oppression, certainly cannot be carried further than they are throughout the practices connected with *slavery*: every year, then, that it is suffered to continue, is highly detrimental to the prosperity of these kingdoms.

I know, John, that thou and others affirm, that the slaves cannot be emancipated without endangering the lives of the white inhabitants of the islands, and probably the loss of the islands themselves. I know, John, that if a man, by murder or robbery, hath possessed himself of the property of another, or if he hath inherited from his father property so acquired, he cannot relinquish that property at the demand of justice, without perhaps being ruined: still, John, I presume, that thou wouldst not think it right that the man should, on that account, be suffered to retain possession of the property of another, obtained by those unlawful and iniquitous means. But, John, assertions are not proofs: it remains for thee, and those who with thee make these assertions, to *prove* that such an act of justice would ruin either the islands, or the proprietors of estates in them. As far as experience enables us to judge, the contrary appears to be the case.

I do perceive that in one of thy papers thou dost attempt to show that this would be the case, by quotations from a work published by a Mr. Hay, who was thirty years an inhabitant of the island of Grenada, in which an insurrection of the negroes took place in 1795. He states, that he himself was taken prisoner by the insurgents in his own house, and carried naked away; that, after a series of ill treatment, he was at length permitted to return, though attended by a strong guard. Now, John, though the cruelties, as might reasonably be expected in such a case, were bad enough, yet I do think that even this insurrection shows that the negroes are not more ferocious than other

human beings. If they had, I suspect, John, that Mr. Hay would not have liyed to supply thee with such a relation of facts to strengthen thy ill-founded fears. I suspect, John, that the most polished people in Europe furnished us, about the same period, with lamentable proofs, that less oppression could produce conduct in *white men* ten times more atrocious, cruel, and revolting, than any that has been laid to the charge of the oppressed negroes.

Recollect, John, that this revolt of the negroes was not the result of *emancipation*. No, John; it was the result of a *refusal* to emancipate; it was the result of long-continued, unbearable, oppression. If, then, this instance proves any thing, it proves, that, as injustice and cruelty produced this retaliation, so mercy and kindness would have had a directly contrary effect, and have been productive of gratitude and due subordination. At any rate, till the experiment has been made, I think, John, that we are not justified in coming to a contrary conclusion.

I cannot, John, be amused by any thing connected with a subject so awfully important in its nature and consequences; otherwise it would be almost amusing to hear thy piteous lamentations over the sufferings of the West India planters and slave-owners, in the same breath in which thou art ridiculing the compassion felt and shown for the ten times more oppressed negroes, though the latter cannot, at any rate, be considered as being the original aggressors. It is always necessary, John, for a judge, who means to do justice and decide impartially, to examine, and listen to, both sides.

I am afraid, John, that with all thy boasted independence, thou art not quite independent of prejudice. A leaning, John, if there must be one, should always be towards the side of the weakest and the poorest. Strength and riches will generally be able to procure advocates, and have their right maintained. This is a lesson which I should have

thought thou, John, wouldst have learned long ago. This lesson, however, it does appear that thou hast still to acquire, otherwise thou wouldst not talk, as thou dost, of the "*injustice of violating the sacred right of property*" by emancipating the negroes from a state of bondage into which they have been thrown by fraud, violence, and inhumanity. Gracious heavens, John! what a revolting perversion of solemn words! The sacred right of a murderer to the carcass of his victim! of the plunderer to the property which he has stolen from the unresisting stranger who never offended him! John, John, this is not calling things by their "*right names*;" no, John, this is, for the basest of all purposes, calling black white; this is worse than standing over the wolf to defend him from the vengeance of the shepherd, while he devours the lamb which he has stolen from his flock. "And Nathan said unto David, *Thou art the man*:" so say I to thee, John, and to every one who dares to oppose the restoration of the slave to his freedom, "*Thou art the man*."

John, if the West India islands cannot be preserved but by the continuance of slavery, by the violation of the claims of humanity, and of the declared *will of God*, then perish the West India islands, as far as relates to Great Britain. She is, in that case, better without them. But we are reduced to no such alarming alternative. Try the experiment: it may be tried immediately, effectually, by proper prudence and precaution, without much of either risk or expense. What, John! art *thou* become timid? art *thou* an advocate for half-measures? art *thou* deterred from doing right by timidity? John, John, look well, man, into thy heart; it is not *fear* that deters thee, in this instance, from advocating the cause of justice. The heart, John, is deceitful beyond all things; yea, John, it is not unfrequently desperately wicked. *Fear*, John, is not of English growth. When has Britain shown (necessity calling for her energies) that she feared? Did

she fear, when the tyrant of the world had been enabled to arm that world against her liberty, against her existence? No, John, she did not *then* fear; she buckled on her armour closer; she looked to her God for assistance; she relied on *Him*, and on the justice of her cause; she rushed into the contest undismayed; she fought, she conquered! Shall she now then fear to do that which she knows her Almighty Defender demands of her? Shall she shrink, with *affected* fears, from doing right, from doing justice? No, John; *Britain* has no fear; she affects none. Her *Rulers* talk about it, but *she* knows it not. Witness the voice of her people, declared in mountains of parchment lying at the feet, and before the eyes, of those who seek to paralyze her efforts, by raising up phantoms which would, in an instant, vanish before the piercing ray of truth.

We are told, that we must not dare even to talk about having justice done to the poor traveller who has fallen among thieves, who have stripped, wounded, and half killed him. No, no; we may look upon him, if we please, but we must pass by on the other side. No pouring in of wine and oil, no binding up of wounds, no setting him upon our own beast, no taking care of him: no, John, no; *he is not* our neighbour! he is a poor, harmless, helpless negro, torn, by *Christian* hands, from his black wife and children, from his distant African home. *He* is no neighbour of ours: we are rich, and great, and powerful; his very touch, his very breath, would contaminate us. Besides, the man who has robbed and half murdered him, is *indeed* our neighbour: he is our fellow-townsmen; he is our friend; he is of the same colour with ourselves; he is a man qualified to ride on white asses; he is a man of influence, a man of substance; and shall not we respect the "*sacred right of property*" of such a man as this? What! shall we ruin *him*, by taking away from him that property which he has stolen, and of which he, till then, stood so much in need? Would not

this be cruel? would not this be unjust? Well, John, truly "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." The *Saints*, the *Quacks*, and the *Humbugs*, John, would never, I will venture to say, either have discovered, or duly appreciated, this sacred right of property of the robber, or the receiver of stolen property, knowing it to be stolen: they, poor ignorant souls, would only have thought of having the property restored to the original owner. Well, well, John, the devil, after all, is often too cunning for us: but really, John, I do seriously think, that we free-born Britons ought to be indulged in the freedom of *talking* a little about these things. As to *thee*, John, I know, by experience as well as by thy assertions and common practice, that *thou* wouldst go further, and venture even to *write* about them, if they were the works of the Radicals (and really they are, to my thinking, *radically* bad); thou wouldst, long ere this, have done thy best to have *written* them down.

Well, John, after all, I certainly do not fear the consequence of either talking or writing about them; on the contrary, I feel assured, that at length some good may arise from so doing, even though many of the talkers, and writers, should know no more about the matter than myself. Nobody, I believe, John, when *thou* first enteredst the pasture from the straw-yard, and didst begin to bellow till every ox and cow, ay, and ass too, heard thee to the water-side, and even on the other side of the water,—thought that thy bellowing would do any good, or even be attended to at all; and yet (though it did for a season get thee into the pound), in the end it certainly produced considerable effect: it put a stop to a good deal of roaring, braying, and bellowing, as well as to some indecent exhibitions, which were before rather offensive to the neighbourhood. So that thou, John, oughtest not to deny to others

a privilege which has been, in some respects at least, useful to thyself.

But, John, there is another attempt which thou statest in thy paper to have been made on the freedom of speech, where, of all others, one would least have expected any such restriction to have been attempted, viz. in the House of Commons. Surely, John, it cannot have been true, that the enlightened Legislator on whom it is charged, would have objected to the claims of *religion* being urged in that place, as a motive to induce Members to support any measures proposed. This, John, is what could not have been expected in *any* quarter; least of all in the one on which it is charged. If the adoption of measures best calculated to promote the real welfare of the State, be the duty of that branch of the Legislature, then, to exclude the enforcement of religious motives, is to hide the light of the sun, when we wish to find an object too minute, or too indistinct, to be discovered without it. It is no reason why Legislators should not suffer religion to influence them, because, in former times, Legislators have deceived others, or been themselves deceived, by cant and hypocrisy. Religion is not cant; and I should hope, that those who are selected as Senators, have wisdom enough to discern the difference between the reality and the counterfeit. I am no advocate, John, for the constant, or even very frequent, introduction, on common occasions, of religious terms or references: when religion is perpetually slipping off the tongue, it seldom retains its seat and its full power in the heart. But, if there be one motive which ought, more than all others, to influence the determination of British Senators, that motive is religion. It is religion which has exalted, and which sustains this country in the high station that she now occupies, above all other States. Shall we then kick from under us the ladder by which we have mounted, and on which we stand? This would indeed be madness. If ever religion

is in its place in public, it is so in the Church and in the Senate. However little it may be recurred to in the speeches, it ought always to occupy the chief place in the hearts of Legislators. That *pure religion* which requires them to promote and secure the interests of the afflicted widows and fatherless children, should never be lost sight of; and if, for a moment, it appears to be so in any instance, it becomes the duty of every one openly and boldly to enforce it. How many afflicted fatherless children and widows there may be among eight hundred thousand West India slaves I pretend not to know; they must however be very numerous. How, or for what purpose, have they hitherto been visited by the Legislature? To rivet their chains and to prolong their captivity! Surely then it is time that the dictates of religion were urged, without dread of ridicule, to stay the arm of oppression uplifted to scourge or to depress.

In the senate of a neighbouring nation we might not have been surprised to have heard religion denounced as not fit to be named among the wisest men in the state, assembled to deliberate on subjects the most awful and important of all others to the welfare of society; but in this *most* Christian country, for such it undoubtedly is, I cannot believe, without hearing it, that one of its highest Legislators would endeavour to prevent the urging of religious motives to influence the determination of the Senate.

I see, John, that thou, very properly, and I trust very sincerely, deprecatest the attempt to hold up, in the British House of Commons, *Richard Carlile*, as being one of the purest *moral characters* in the nation, and, therefore, of course highly deserving of imitation. Then, John, thou dost, it seems, think that religion stands for something; and though thou adducest the West India planters as being in some degree entitled to commendation and imitation, yet thou dost, by implication at least, admit re-

ligion to be essential to the formation of a character worthy of being considered as perfect. I can, however, remember the time, John, when it was boldly asserted, that religion would cause the slaves to revolt, and prove the ruin of the West India islands. This was one of those unfounded assertions boldly made for the purpose of intimidation; but what has the fact proved to be? Why, by the admission of the planters themselves, that subordination and good conduct has become prevalent in proportion as Christianity has increased among the slaves. Nay, John, so convinced have the planters in general become of this fact, that many of those who were opposed to them are now inviting the Christian missionaries to visit and settle upon their several plantations.

It is a fact, John, of which thou canst not be uninformed, that in all the partial insurrections which have taken place, the Christian slaves have not only remained peaceable, but that they were intrusted by their overseers with arms to defend their masters and their property from the insurgents. After this, John, one can scarcely be surprised at the strange assertion which is stated to have been made by one of His Majesty's ministers, that slavery and Christianity are not incompatible. This was said by way of reconciling the friends of abolition to the continuance of slavery: but surely, John, I should think that no one would affirm, that slavery is any part of Christianity. That they can exist together in the same country is certainly true; so may Christianity and any other vile practice. The *State Lottery*, for instance, is sanctioned, though not defended, year after year, by a Christian Legislature; and yet it is admitted to be contrary to the principles of Christianity as well as to the dictates of sound policy*.

* Since this was written I have been happy to learn that this national disgrace is in future to be discontinued.

It has likewise been said, John (as reported), by the same liberal-minded Legislator, that slavery is not forbidden in the Christian Scriptures. How hardly, John, are the supporters of slavery put to their shifts while they will resort to such subterfuges ! These very persons admit that slavery is opposed to the very *spirit* of the Gospel, and yet they endeavour to palliate it, by affirming that the *letter* of Scripture is not against it. Do they not know that it is the Spirit that giveth life, while the letter killeth ? Had our blessed Saviour, or his Apostles, thought it right to interfere with particular human institutions and practices, they would have denounced those legal tribunals in which justice was almost yearly bought and sold, and by which they were themselves exposed uncondemned to every species of insult and cruelty, and delivered up to be put to death by an infuriated rabble. But their object was not to create tumults, but to purify the heart ; to establish principles, which, as they gained ground, would effectually eradicate every evil practice.

Christianity is of too universal, too spiritual a nature to restrict itself to local or temporary abuses, or to war with carnal weapons. That Christianity is not opposed to slavery, the warmest of the advocates of the latter will not now venture explicitly to affirm. Never, since the promulgation of those principles, was their prevalence and their triumph so complete as at the present moment. They have conquered prejudice itself. They have not extirpated it, but they have put it to flight ; they have driven it to take refuge in disguise. Self-interest is compelled to acknowledge their irresistible control. This is the conquest which Christianity was appointed to achieve ; this, perhaps, is the time when her mighty power was to be more particularly manifested. Whatever might be felt, there was not a voice nor a hand found in all our legislative assembly bold enough to exert itself openly in defence of

slavery! This, John, I apprehend, was not exactly what thou hadst expected. Surely, John, that which thou callest *humbuggery* must be something much better and more powerful than thou wast thyself at all aware of! It would almost seem as if these *Saints*, *Quacks*, and *Wilberforces* had, some way or other, in spite of thy strenuous efforts, converted all the House of Commons. All joined in deprecating the wicked practice which thou defendest. The only difference in opinion among them appeared to be respecting the most practicable mode of banishing it for ever. I am not without hopes, John, but that thou thyself may, in the end, become a convert, and as great a *humbug* as the best of them all.

We must however, John, proceed one step farther. I, like thee, am opposed to weak or half measures in a good cause. We have unanimously declared slavery to be opposed to Christianity, to be tyrannical and unjust, and therefore to be offensive in the sight of God. Now, John, I cannot for the life of me discover what right we can have as Christians to deliberate how far and how long we shall permit ourselves and others to continue to commit this great and acknowledged wickedness. This is a compromise which I conceive Christianity does not admit of. Do not let us hear any more of the *fears*, real or affected, of doing right. God is always able and willing to make a way to escape for them that love him, and who seek to obey him. The fact, I believe, is, that those fears are more assumed than felt: they are the last strong hold of the oppressor; but the righteous is bold as a lion, and knows that it is ever better and safer to obey God than man. Let us not, then, be any longer deceived; let us dare to do right, and if we live to repent of so doing we shall be the first that ever did. Timidity produced procrastination; that procrastination has, in many instances, continued and increased the horrors of the slave-trade and of slavery during more

than thirty years. The struggle has been constantly continued, and, therefore, but little good has been effected: let us then profit by past errors, and let us manfully dare to do that which is now on all hands declared to be right.

I will not call the sincerity of Ministers in question. It would be wrong to suppose that they were not before sincere. Former assurances, however, have not been acted upon, and there is, therefore, danger that the present ones will prove equally inefficacious. Let not then the spirit of the nation, which has now been roused against the continuance of slavery, be suffered to subside: let it not evaporate in the expression of opinion, that it is *expedient* that such and such measures *ought* to be pursued. Let us have something in a tangible form: let us have it enacted, that at such and such times such and such regulations *shall* take place: let the measures and regulations be clearly, distinctly, and positively defined and decreed as well as the time. Without this it is to be feared, that thirty years more may be suffered to pass, and the poor negroes may at the end of them be as much slaves as they are at present. Procrastination is ever the result of unwilling acquiescence. Promises cost but little: let us then, if possible, have a pledge which must be redeemed. If the advocates and the promoters of the abolition of slavery stop short of this, I fear that their labours and the voice of the country will have been exerted to little purpose: the work will be to begin again at some distant period, when *Quacks*, and *Humbugs*, and *Wilberforces* may not be so numerous as they are at present. I know, John, that thou and those who act and think with thee require not only spirit, but persevering exertion, to overcome your opposition. Ye are in this instance the children of this world, and ye will require more than earthly wisdom and strength to over-match you.

There is one argument, John, which, though I do not

recollect that it hath been used by thee, is frequently brought forward by the interested advocates of slavery as being at least an extenuating circumstance, viz. that the blacks are an inferior race of beings to the whites; that they have not natural capacities to qualify them for the possession and enjoyment of liberty, and that, therefore, they are better off as slaves than they would be as freemen. This is a salve to which I know that some rich, some *noble* proprietors of West India estates resort, to mitigate occasional inward pains. I would not, John, advise either them or thee to depend upon it: its effect can only be of a temporary nature. Admit the fact. What then? If ignorance or incapacity is to subject to oppression and bondage, both thou, John, and the noble and rich proprietors, must be fully aware that slavery and cruelty would be very prevalent even in Great Britain itself. No, John; these deficiencies call only for greater kindness and protection. But, John, we are all in a good measure the creatures of habit. The circumstances in which they are placed very frequently determine the character and apportion the abilities of individuals. Had the wisest white man in existence been from his youth a West India slave, it is probable that he would have been as stupid and listless as the worst among them. This is no surmise: we have the concurrent testimony of many respectable witnesses to the fact, that white men, when they have been long depressed by severe treatment in slavery, have been rendered almost as senseless as brute beasts. We do likewise know that black men, who have not been in slavery, but in situations demanding and admitting of mental exertions, have evinced very considerable energy and abilities. If, then, natural inferiority of intellect in them did really confer any right to enslave and oppress them, I suspect that there would not very often be found even that plea for holding them in bondage.

I am decidedly of opinion, John, that the proprietors

of West India estates have, of all others, the strongest motives to promote the abolition of slavery. I can entertain but little doubt that their estates would, in a very few years, be considerably advanced in value to them by the measure. Instead of their being themselves the holders of slaves, and subject to that loss which arises, more or less, in all such cases from the mismanagement or dishonesty of overseers and agents, there would soon be a striving among men of property to rent the estates and reside upon them: the advantages to all parties, in that case, are too obvious to need enumerating.

Slaves can never be resorted to but from necessity, i. e. where free labourers cannot be had. It is only from the scarcity of the latter that the former are worth having: if there were once to be an excess beyond the demand, nobody would have them. Who would have a gang of slaves in England to feed, and clothe, and lodge them through the year, for all the work which could be flogged out of them? No one, I will venture to say. The work would, in that case, cost double the price of that of free labourers. The inconvenience and loss then arising from the abolition would only be temporary, while the advantages would be lasting.

I am anxious, John, to press the foregoing truths on thy mind, because I know that thou hast an opportunity, which I will venture to say thou wouldst never regret improving, of being of much service to both the black and white population of our West India islands. If something effectual be not soon done to banish slavery, the hour of retribution must eventually come, and, in all probability, is not far off. It will be dreadful. The evil of emancipation has never yet been, and, I will venture to say, never will be felt; but the evils resulting from the effects of oppression and slavery have been frequent and lamentable. Can any thing stronger be urged against the

practice, than that a man cannot sleep in safety and confidence, surrounded by his own servants and domestics, when his enemies are those of his own household? Is this a state of domestic society to be encouraged? Is this the life of *love* which a *Christian* ought to live, which a Christian Legislature ought to sanction? which a wise man, of any religious persuasion, would think essential to the general welfare of society? These questions need no answer! Short-sighted, indeed, must that politician be, who cannot look beyond any seeming difficulties that lie in the way of slave emancipation, to the real and permanent advantages which are beyond them.

I very much doubt, John, whether the present existing laws in this country, will permit any one subject of His Majesty King George the Fourth to hold in bondage another of his subjects, who has not been consenting to the terms of servitude. If the prohibition of slavery can be no other way obtained, I should very much like this question to be brought to the test. A covenant, I conceive, in order to be binding, must be of two parts: without a covenant, I apprehend there can be no right to compel the services of any rational being arrived at those years of discretion, when the laws declare him to be entitled to act for himself. This trial, however, should only be resorted to, if all less objectionable means should fail, which, I am persuaded, they will not.

The plan which I have to propose may, I conceive, with few modifications, be adopted with perfect safety. It will, perhaps, be doing as much for the present race of slaves as can, under all circumstances, be done for them; i. e. as much as would, on the whole, be for their advantage. The planters would, I am persuaded, find it so much their interest to promote *piece-work*, when the nature of the employment admitted of it, that the former slaves would gradually be accustomed to habits of industry, and

of acting from better motives than that of fear. The whip would gradually cease to be necessary, and would in the end be entirely discarded. The West India islands, from the gradual increase of native freemen, and of property among them, would become a market for British manufactures to an extent never yet contemplated.

I believe, John, that thou, as well as others, hast said a great deal on the subject of indemnification to the proprietors and planters. They will, I trust, receive it, and more than receive it, in the satisfaction which will arise from contributing to the happiness of nearly a million of their fellow-creatures. Their pecuniary loss, if any, even in the first instance, will be trivial; in the end, I am persuaded as before stated, they will be gainers.

All property is liable to fluctuate in value from extrinsic circumstances: whoever has purchased West India property, purchased it subject to contingencies; whoever has inherited it, inherited it subject to the same. There never was any law to establish slavery *for ever*; if there had, it would have been absurd. Slavery was always considered as being objectionable, and the Legislature had always the power to abolish it: the probability then was, that it would eventually be prohibited. The slave-owner, then, supposing him to be a loser by the abolition, has no more right to complain than the holder of five per cent. stock had, when he was compelled to give it up, and accept of one of very inferior value in lieu of it.

Notwithstanding, John, thy very great outcry against this flagrant infringement of the "*sacred right of property*," I do think that the poor negro has a *sacred right* to his *liberty*, till he has forfeited it by some crime, of which no human being, no human laws, ought to deprive him. If he have, by any infringement of the divine laws, been unjustly deprived of it, it is *he*, I conceive, and not his enslaver, who is entitled to *remuneration*. Even supposing

the slave to have become such by the decree of a Court of Justice in his own country, what human being has a right to visit the offences of the transgressor on his children, and entail slavery upon beings yet unborn, to the remotest generation? We must not imagine, John, that a change in the state of the negro population in the West India islands, such as is contemplated and such as is necessary, can be accomplished without difficulties and temporary inconveniences. I am, however, fully persuaded, that eventually all parties will be benefited by it.

The sketch of a plan which will be found at the end of this letter may serve, I think, as a safe foundation on which to erect a more perfect structure. At any rate I cannot but think that it will be found, slight as it is, deserving of very serious consideration. The object is immediately to abolish slavery in the islands, and that without either causing much loss to any party, making any violent or excessive alterations in any respect, or hazarding, to any great extent, either the peace of society or the welfare of individuals. The negroes, though freed, will not be thrown into any new situation, in which many of them might be even worse off than they were. At the first the principal change will be in the *name*. They will be no longer *slaves*, but labour and obedience will be equally required. By degrees, the more industrious and deserving will acquire property; they will purchase their time out; they will become free labourers; and many of them, I doubt not, eventually highly respectable and opulent men. The change will be exceedingly gradual, but it will, I am persuaded, be gradually a change for the better. Population will increase, labour will become cheaper, more land will be brought into cultivation, different natural productions will be the consequence, land will rise in value, riches and luxury will increase, a wide market will be opened for British manufacture, settlers will become abundant, the negro race will slowly (through

intermarriage) disappear, and the West India islands may become, before the end of another century, as truly Christianized as the mother island.

In taking leave of thee, John, at this time, I would do it in the same Christian spirit as that with which, I trust, I have been actuated throughout the whole of this long epistle. I have been desirous of giving thee credit for as much of good intention and well-doing as I could; but I cannot commend thy rude violence in condemning all those who differ from thee in opinion on subjects respecting which, the wisest and the best of men may, and do, entertain various sentiments: much less can I think thee right in speaking evil with rudeness, of those whose lives throughout, give the lie to the calumnious reports which thou propagatest.

Be as severe as good manners and Christian charity will admit of, against all flagrant breaches of decorum and morality: let the openly profligate, the blasphemer, and the propagator of sedition, experience thy correction; maintain, as firmly as thou pleasest, thy own decided, unprejudiced opinions on political as well as on religious subjects; but grant to others, who are equally disinterested, the freedom which thou claimest for thyself. Above all, avoid acrimony in speaking of those who are endeavouring to serve, by means, perhaps, of which thou disapprovest, the cause of humanity. I detest as much as thou canst the perpetual whining of those pseudo-philanthropists, who, to serve political and selfish purposes, attempt to make the poor in general of this happy land dissatisfied with their country, their king, and their rulers. The advocates of the abolition of slavery cannot, however, be considered as such. They are confessedly nine tenths of the loyal, the religious, and the truly respectable part of the nation. A class of Englishmen such as this, is, at any rate, entitled to be treated with respect by every one, however they may differ from them in opinion either on that or any other subject.

John Bull, I had just finished this letter, when I received thy paper of May 25th. Ribaldry about *Cant*, *Hum-bugs*, *Hum-fum*, and *Gam-boo-gees*, with affected whine about the sufferings of turtle, horses, dogs, fish, worms, snails, insects, and animalcula, is no vindication of the cruel injustice inflicted on their fellow-creatures by human beings professing to be Christians. What wouldst thou, John, have said to any one who had thus attempted to turn thy slight sufferings in Newgate, into ridicule? John! John! be a man, be a just and a merciful man; be a Christian; and thou wilt then invariably do to others as thou wouldst have them do to thee! Farewell.

SKETCH OF A PLAN

FOR THE

Safe, speedy, and effectual Abolition of Slavery.

Negro adults of both sexes, to have the option afforded them of engaging from the day of , as hired servants for life, to their present owners. A scale of wages to be fixed by law, say about the sum which the clothing, maintenance and lodging of a slave, may be supposed to cost. For these wages to work during hours of five days in each week. All engagements to be registered, as well as all refusals. Sunday to be wholly a day of holy rest. One other day in the week (say Thursday), being market-day, the hired negroes to have entirely at their own disposal.

Hired negroes to be paid for all over hours on which they may be induced to work for their masters.

All negro children of both sexes, born before the day of , when they are ten years of age, to be bound apprentice to their present owners, till they are

twenty-one; then to be hired as above, or, on refusal, to be considered as slaves till they consent. All bindings to be registered. Till ten years of age, to be maintained and educated at the expense of their owners.

All negro children born in wedlock after the day of _____, to be free, and live with their parents, their masters allowing them _____ per week for each child till it is ten years of age; to be then bound to said master as above. When twenty-one, to be free.

Every negro child, born out of wedlock after the day of _____, to be maintained solely by its father till it is eight years of age, without any allowance from the master. On father's neglecting to provide for said child, master to maintain it, father working one hour longer for him on each day. Child, when eight years of age, to be bound apprentice. When of age, to be free.

All children of negro mothers by white fathers, born out of wedlock after the _____ day of _____, to be free, but maintained by father. Father, before birth of child, to pay _____ as security and penalty.

A scale of prices at which hired negroes may purchase their entire freedom, to be fixed by law.

Government to allow _____, as a dower, to all female negroes on their being married, with the master's consent, to a negro servant of the same master.

The oath of negroes, under certain restrictions, to be taken as evidence.

No negro to be transferred to another master without his own consent. Such transfer to be registered.

All excessive whipping to be abolished, as well as all branding and marking.

THE END.